

# 1 FastLane Overview

## ***Introduction***

Prior to using the Research Administration User Guide, it is important to understand the FastLane system. FastLane is an interactive real-time system used to conduct National Science Foundation business and to disseminate information to the public over the Internet. It has been in existence since 1995.

There are over 250,000 registered FastLane users and 42,000 registered organizations that access the FastLane application. NSF and their client community are currently using FastLane for all proposal, review, and award interactions. The FastLane web site is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. NSF performs LAN maintenance on the third Sunday of each month from 12:00 am to 8:00 am Eastern Time. All NSF sites, including FastLane, are unavailable for access during this time.

## ***System Software Requirements***

To use FastLane you need:

- A forms-capable browser (Netscape 4.7 or higher, or Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.01 or higher)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 or higher
- Word Processing software

## ***Getting Started***

To access the FastLane homepage, you can either:

1. Launch your web browser and access the FastLane home page at <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>

Or

2. If you are inside NSF, choose **FastLane** from the NSF WinStation and select **FastLane External Homepage**.

## Viewing the Homepage

The FastLane Homepage has the following features that can be identified in the **FastLane Homepage Main Screen** (Figure 1):



Figure 1. FastLane Home Page Main Screen

### 1. Advisories

Any FastLane system status notice should be listed in this section. If you are experiencing a problem with the FastLane system, please look at the Advisories first before calling FastLane User Support.

### 2. FastLane User Support Numbers

FastLane User Support number: 1-800-673-6188

FastLane Availability (Recording): 1-800-437-7408

### 3. FastLane Demonstration Site

FastLane has a demonstration site that mirrors the official FastLane site. It simulates most of the FastLane features and is an excellent place to become familiar with the FastLane process.

Researchers and admin personnel are encouraged to access the demonstration site before using the production FastLane homepage. You do not have to be a registered FastLane user to access the demonstration site. If you are a registered user, you cannot get into the demonstration site by using your actual login information. Most of the login screens for this site have pre-filled login values that should not be changed.

To access the demonstration site:

1. Launch your web browser and access the FastLane demonstration page at <http://www.fldemo.nsf.gov>.

Or

If you are on the FastLane Homepage, select the **Demonstration** site link.

2. The *FastLane Demonstration Site Screen* (Figure 2) will be displayed on the screen.



Figure 2. FastLane Demonstration Site Screen

3. Select **Return to FastLane** to return to the official FastLane homepage: